CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information common to the light antiarmor weapons discussed in this manual. Topics include care and handling, destruction and decontamination procedures, and operating temperatures. Light antiarmor weapons are used against light armored vehicles, field fortifications, or other similar targets. These weapons are issued as rounds of ammunition to individual soldiers in addition to their assigned weapons and the unit's organic antiarmor weapons. Light antiarmor weapons can withstand extreme weather and environmental conditions, including arctic, tropical, and desert. The light antiarmor weapons category includes both light antiarmor and light antitank weapons.

1-1. TYPES OF LIGHT ANTIARMOR WEAPONS

Light antiarmor weapons include the M72-series light antitank weapon (LAW) and the M136 AT4. The M72-series LAW was designed in the early 1960's for use against light tanks of that era (Figure 1-1). The M136 AT4 was designed in the late 1980's for use against the improved armor of light armored vehicles (Figure 1-2).

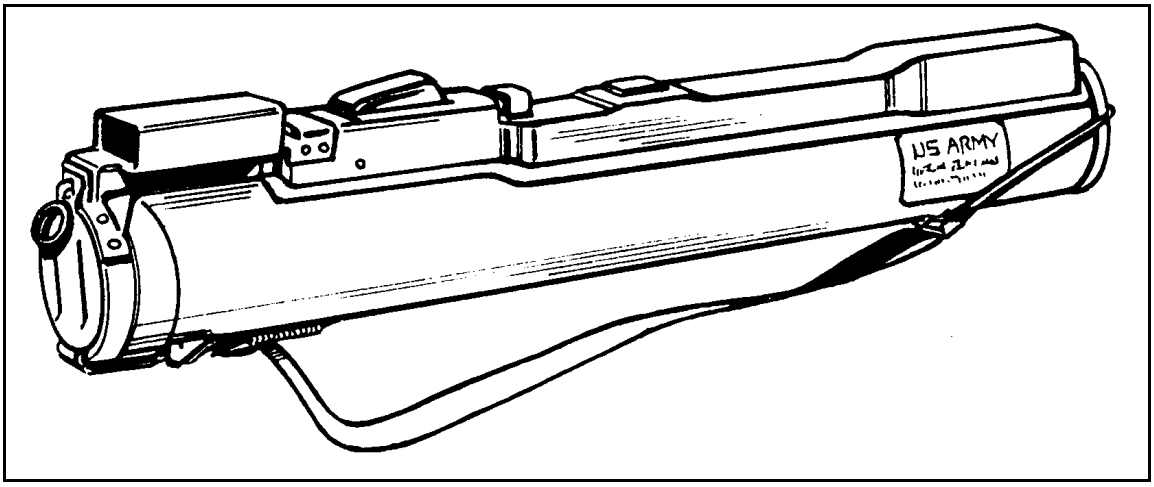

Figure 1-1. M72-series light antitank weapon.

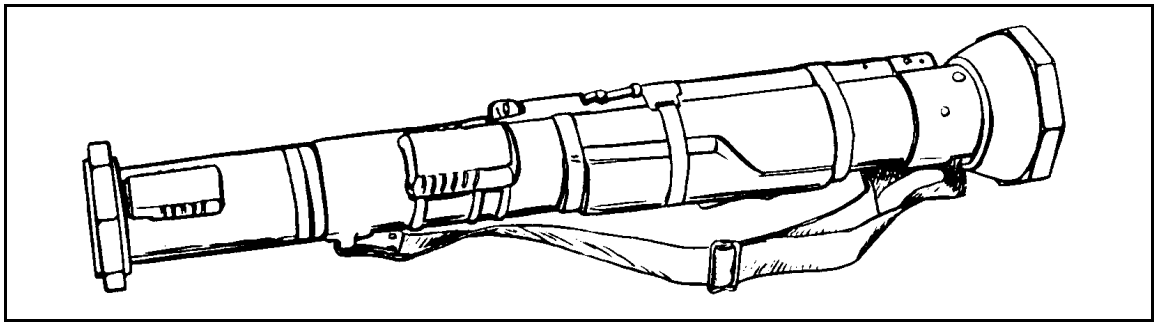

Figure 1-2. M136 AT4 light antiarmor weapon.

1-2. CARE AND HANDLING

Light antiarmor weapons are issued as rounds of ammunition. The only requirement for their care is a visual inspection, outlined in the appropriate chapter for each weapon (Chapter 2 for the LAW and Chapter 3 for the AT4).

1-3. DESTRUCTION PROCEDURES (COMBAT ONLY)

In combat, live and expended light antiarmor weapons are destroyed only to prevent their capture or use by the enemy and, even then, only on order. For such an order to be given, the weapons must be so badly damaged that neither repairs nor cannibalization can restore them to usable condition (FM 5-25). Table 1-1 provides destruction procedures for live and expended light antiarmor weapons; Appendix A discusses safety precautions to follow when destroying them.

DANGER

TO AVOID POSSIBLE INJURY OR DEATH, MOVE TO A SAFE POSITION AND TAKE COVER BEFORE USING ANY DESTRUCTION PROCEDURE. BEFORE USING DEMOLITIONS FOR ANY REASON, YOU MUST KNOW THE PROPER PROCEDURES IN FM 5-25.

LIVE LIGHT ANTIARMOR ROUND	**DEMOLITION**	Prepare a 113-gram (one-quarter pound) demolition charge. Tape or tie the charge over the propellant charge. Dual prime the charge to reduce the chance of a misfire.
	BURNING	Construct a pit or trench deep enough to allow 0.6 meter (2 feet) of space between the weapons and the top surface of the ground. Place combustible material such as wood, paper, or rags in the pit, then place the weapon inside, pointed into the side of the pit and directed away from all friendly soldiers. Pour diesel fuel or oil over the weapons and the combustible material.
	FIRING	If time does not permit use of the previous methods, dispose of the weapons by firing them randomly in the direction of the enemy. Before using this method, observe all appropriate safety requirements.

Table 1-1. Destruction procedures for light antiarmor weapons.

EXPENDED LIGHT ANTIARMOR ROUND	**MECHANICAL**	Though you must never use mechanical means to destroy live antiarmor weapons or expended M136 AT4s, you may do so to destroy the residue from an expended M72-series LAW. For example, you can drive over it with a tracked vehicle or strike it with a pick, ax, or other object, as long as you make it unusable.
	DEMOLITION	Same as a live round.
	BURNING	Same as a live round.

Table 1-1. Destruction procedures for light antiarmor weapons (continued).

DANGER

1. WHEN USING FIRE TO DESTROY A LIGHT ANTIARMOR WEAPON, THE TIME REQUIRED TO EXPLODE THE WARHEAD IS UNPREDICTABLE. ALSO, IGNITING THE PROPELLANT CAN CAUSE IT TO FIRE THE WARHEAD IN ANY DIRECTION, WHICH COULD IN TURN CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH.

2. OBSERVE THE APPROPRIATE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS WHEN HANDLING DIESEL FUEL. CARELESSNESS COULD CAUSE PAINFUL, EVEN FATAL, BURNS.

3. DO NOT TRY TO USE VEHICLES OR MECHANICAL MEANS TO DESTROY LIVE ANTIARMOR WEAPONS. EITHER METHOD COULD DETONATE THE WARHEAD OR PROPELLANT CHARGE, WHICH COULD CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH.

1-4. DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES

The soldier can use his M258A1 or DKIE (XM280) individual decontamination packet to remove H-series, G-series, and V-series agents. FM 3-5 provides more information about decontamination procedures for equipment and weapons.

DANGER

NEVER USE DS2 TO DECONTAMINATE ANY LIGHT ANTIARMOR WEAPON. THE DS2 WOULD DISSOLVE THE RUBBER AND PLASTIC SEALS, ALLOWING THE DS2 TO REACH THE PROPELLANT AND PRODUCING AN EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS MIXTURE.

1-5. OPERATING TEMPERATURES

Operating temperatures for the M72-series LAW and M136 AT4 are -40 degrees to 140 degrees Fahrenheit (-40 degrees to 60 degrees Centigrade). Firing light antiarmor weapons in temperatures outside these limits could cause a misfire or produce some other hazard for the soldier (Appendix A).